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COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLE OPERATORS —

INSIDE: ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COMMERCIAL DRIVERS LICENSE

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AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY OF STATE JIM EDGAR

Dear Commercial Motor Vehicle Operator:

The new commercial drivers license (CDL) is about safety — a major concern for today's bus and truck drivers. The U.S. Congress passed the new federal law which requires states to adopt CDL programs in order to promote safety among the drivers of large vehicles which share our highways.

Commercial drivers cover millions of miles of highway throughout Illinois each year. They represent a vital asset to our state and nation. You can be proud that bus and truck drivers generally are among the safest, most courteous drivers on the road today. Unfortunately, the actions of a few unqualified and irresponsible drivers are hurting the image of an entire profession. The CDL program is designed to get these drivers off the road.

In implementing the new CDL, we in Illinois have tried to design a program to meet the needs and concerns of today's commercial drivers. We have prepared this mailing in order to answer the questions that you and other drivers have about this new program. It includes information on deadlines for obtaining a CDL and explains the new drivers license classifications. If you have further questions after reading this mailer, you can call 1-800-252-8980.

I hope that you find the information inside informative and helpful and that you will join me in supporting these new laws. With your cooperation, we can make Illinois highways safer for all motorists.

Sincerely,

COMMERCIAL DRIVERS LICENSE — THE BIG PICTURE

Q: Lately, I've been hearing a lot about a new law establishing something called a commercial drivers license (CDL). What is a CDL?

A: The CDL is part of a new nationwide effort to ensure those who drive commercial vehicles (mostly large trucks and buses) are safe, qualified, and responsible. The **Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986**, passed by the U.S. Congress, requires all states to create CDL programs by 1993 or face major penalties.

Q: I sometimes drive a big truck at work. Will I need to get a CDL?

A: If you plan to operate commercial vehicles after April 1, 1992, you must obtain a CDL. The CDL will be required for any driver operating:

- Any combination of vehicles weighing 26,001 pounds or more.
- Any vehicle designed to transport 16 or more persons.
- Any vehicle requiring placarding when carrying hazardous materials.

Most farmers, firefighters, recreational vehicle operators, and military operators are waived from CDL requirements.

Q: You said that one of the goals of the CDL program is to make sure truck drivers are qualified. It sounds like the CDL tests will be pretty tough.

A: Drivers must prove they can safely operate the type of vehicle for which they are being licensed. Most Illinois drivers (who have already been road-tested in representative vehicles) will need to take a new, tougher written test. Others (those with bad driving records or lacking experience) will also take a tougher road test.

Answers to more CDL questions *INSIDE*

THE STRAIGHT STORY

Q: It sounds like there is a lot of new material to learn. Where can I get all this new information?

A: A new CDL study guide will be available in early 1990 to assist drivers in preparing for the written and behind-the-wheel exams. The study guide will provide detailed information on every aspect of the tests. If you study the manual carefully, you'll have all the information you need to pass the tests.

Experts recommend that you wait until you receive your test notice before getting a new manual. This will give you more than a month to study for the exams.



Q: When will CDLs be issued?

A: Illinois will begin issuing CDLs on April 1, 1990. By April 1, 1992, all drivers who need them must have a CDL.

Q: My current class D license expires February 28, 1990. Will I be issued a new CDL when I renew my license in February?

A: No. You will be required to renew your license, but you will not be issued a CDL. CDLs will not be issued until April 1, 1990. However, sometime between January 1, 1991 and April 1, 1992, you will receive a callback notice which will inform you when and where to obtain your CDL.

Q: Why can't I just wait to get my CDL until my next license expires in 1994? I'm a good driver — I don't want to make an extra trip and wait in line just to prove it.

A: Sorry, but you can't wait until 1994. State and federal law requires that all commercial drivers must have new CDLs no later than April 1, 1992. If your license expires during the phase-in period, you will receive your regular renewal notice. If your license expires after April 1, 1992, you will receive a callback notice telling you when to obtain your license. These notices will begin going out in January, 1991. If you live in the Chicago metropolitan area (60 percent of all commercial vehicle operators do), you'll be able to visit one of four new test stations created just for CDL applicants!

Q: It sounds pretty complicated. Is there anything I should be doing now?

A: No. Until you receive your CDL notice, there is nothing you need to do. Once you receive your notice, you should obtain a copy of the CDL study guide and begin to prepare for the tests. You'll have plenty of time — more than a month.



Q: I talk to many other truckers who are telling me that their states are charging \$100 or more for a CDL. How much will my Illinois license cost?

A: The most you will be charged to obtain your CDL is \$40. If you receive your CDL before your license expires, the fee will be pro-rated and you will pay less.

Q: What does the \$40 CDL fee pay for?

A: \$10 covers the cost of your basic four year driving privileges (the same fee applies to all drivers). \$24 pays for the cost of administering the CDL program. The final \$6 is used to pay for Illinois' participation in a national computer system designed to share CDL information between the states.

Q: What types of questions will I have to answer on the written knowledge test?

A: The written knowledge test will consist of a section of standardized questions all commercial drivers must answer. Topics included will be safe driving techniques, vehicle operation, safety equipment, and dealing with emergencies. In addition, specialized sections will be added to the test based on the type of vehicle you will be operating.

Q: I've heard a lot of drivers won't have to take the behind-the-wheel test. Is this true?

A: Because such a large percentage of commercial drivers have good driving records, experts estimate that approximately 85 percent will have the behind-the-wheel test waived. Any driver who currently has a classified license, two years experience with regular employment and a good driving record with no suspensions or revocations may have the road test waived.

Q: If the test is really tough, shouldn't I start studying right away?

A: That won't be necessary. You can wait until you receive your renewal or callback notice to pick up your CDL study guide. You will still have plenty of time to study. The study guide has all the information you need to pass the written and skill tests.

Q: I'm a professional driver. Shouldn't I expect to be tested by a professional?

A: You're right, professionals should be treated like professionals. That's why our drivers license examiners are undergoing special training to make sure that they're qualified to test professionals.

Q: I've heard the CDL tests are really tough. What happens if I fail the test?

A: CDL tests are thorough but fair. We're telling you the tests are difficult to make sure that you study. That's the best way to avoid failing the tests. But if you do fail, you can take the test over. You are allowed three tests within a year for your \$40 fee.

PRESENT DRIVERS LICENSE CLASSIFICATION

CURRENTLY IN EFFECT

Class A Motor vehicle through 8,000 lbs. gross registered weight.

Class B Motor vehicle through 16,000 lbs. gross registered weight.

Class C Any motor vehicle except tractor-semitrailer combinations or stinger steered semitrailers.

Class D Any motor vehicle, except motorcycles.

NEW DRIVERS LICENSE CLASSIFICATION

EFFECTIVE 4/1/90

Class A Combination vehicles - *GCWR of 26,001 or more pounds.

Class B Single vehicle with *GVWR of 26,001 or more pounds.

Class C Single vehicle with a *GVWR of at least 16,001 pounds but less than 26,001 pounds.

Class D Single vehicle with a *GVWR of less than 16,001 pounds.

*GCWR: Gross Combination Weight Rating
*GVWR: Gross Vehicle Weight Rating

Q: I can read, but not really well enough to read a study guide or the CDL exam. What should I do?

A: Individuals with reading difficulties can request an oral examination instead of the written test. But that's only a temporary solution. A better answer is to improve your reading skills. The Secretary of State's Literacy Office can provide individual tutoring throughout the state to help drivers develop the reading skills necessary to pass the CDL tests. There is no cost for this program. For more information contact the literacy hotline at 1-800-321-9511.

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Q: Right now, I have to file certain reports under federal and state law. Will the new CDL law change the reports I make?

A: Most reporting requirements under the CDL program are already in effect. Drivers are required to notify the Secretary of State of any out-of-state traffic violation or sanctions within 30 days of conviction. In addition, drivers must notify their employer of any traffic conviction within 30 days. Common carriers must notify their lessor, while owner-operators or independent contractors are required to keep a report of the conviction at their principal place of business. Sanctions for failure to follow these rules will begin in 1992, but it's best, and easiest, to get things right — right from the start.

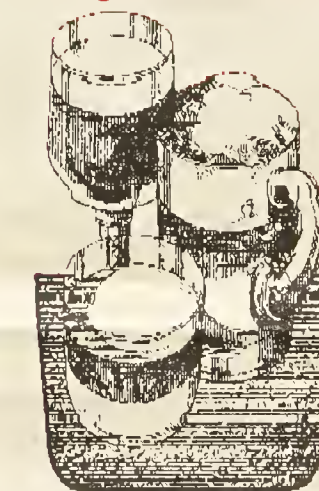
Q: What should I do if my address changes?

A: You must notify the Secretary of State of any name or address change within 10 days. You then have 30 days to apply for a corrected CDL at any driver services facility.

Q: Is it true that I can be placed out-of-service for having any alcohol in my blood system?

A: Yes. Drinking alcohol and driving the big rigs just don't mix. ANY alcohol in your blood system is reason for a police officer to place you out-of-service. This means that you will not be allowed to operate any commercial vehicle for at least 24 hours.

Q: What level of alcohol constitutes driving under the influence for commercial drivers?



A: If your blood alcohol concentration (BAC) is .04 percent or higher, you will be placed out-of-service and disqualified for not less than 12 months. A second offense will lead to even tougher sanctions and a possible disqualification for life.

Q: What happens if I refuse to take the tests to determine my BAC?

A: Any driver refusing to submit to a test or failing to complete a test to determine BAC will be disqualified for not less than 12 months. A second offense will result in tougher penalties and possible disqualification for life.

Q: Are the sanctions tougher if the driver is transporting hazardous materials?

A: Yes. Most alcohol offenses will result in a disqualification of no less than three years if you are transporting hazardous materials.

Q: Is it true that I can be disqualified for life if I am a repeat alcohol offender?

A: You may be disqualified for life if you commit a second violation of any alcohol offense (except less than .04 BAC), or any combination of offenses arising from two or more separate incidents.



Q: What types of offenses can lead to disqualification?

A: Besides alcohol violations, commercial drivers will be disqualified for not less than 12 months for the following offenses: leaving the scene of an accident; committing

a felony while operating a commercial vehicle; using a commercial vehicle to make, distribute or dispense dangerous drugs; or possessing such drugs in a commercial vehicle with the intent to distribute or dispense them. Disqualifications can also result from multiple violations of serious traffic offenses.

Q: When do these sanctions take effect?

A: While all reporting requirements are in effect now, sanctions will take effect only for offenses occurring on or after April 1, 1992, after each driver has received his or her new license.



Q: What are the penalties for not complying with the new CDL law?

A: Under federal law, those who fail to comply with CDL requirements could face

a fine of up to \$5,000 and not more than 90 days in jail. At the state level, those who repeatedly fail to comply can face up to six months in jail, as well as a fine.

Q: This is a complicated law. How did the Secretary of State's Office decide how it would be administered?

A: Before we drafted our plans for this new program, we talked to people just like you: truckers, trucking companies, union officials, safety experts. All these groups were represented in the Secretary of State Truck Safety Task Force, which assisted in drafting Illinois' CDL legislation.



Answers to your CDL questions!

CDL FACTS

Commercial motor vehicles represent one percent of all registered vehicles, but they travel 4.3 percent of all vehicle miles and are involved in 9.3 percent of all fatal accidents on our highways.

Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Commercial motor vehicle operators experienced 58 job-related deaths per 100,000 workers, compared to an average of 11 deaths for 100,000 workers for all industries.

Source: NHTSA, National Safety Council

Driver inexperience is the prime factor in preventable truck accidents. Drivers with less than one year of experience constitute one percent of the carrier work force but account for three percent of all accidents.

Source: Northwestern University Truck Safety Conference

Driver error is the major factor in 95 percent of all preventable truck accidents.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

The Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986 (CMVSA) requires that states implement a uniform national commercial drivers license (CDL) program no later than April 1, 1992. In addition, the act:

- requires that commercial motor vehicle operators be tested in the type of vehicle they will be driving.
- makes it illegal for commercial motor vehicle operators to have more than one license.
- establishes a nationwide registry of CDL holders, the Commercial Drivers License Information System (CDLIS)
- makes it illegal for a driver to operate a commercial motor vehicle when there is any alcohol in that driver's system.

Illinois is one of only 12 states which currently requires a road test in a vehicle representative of the class license the driver is seeking. Thirty-eight states must implement this requirement in order to comply with CMVSA mandates.

Source: Driver Services Department Research

At the present time, there are 553,000 Class C and D drivers licensed in Illinois out of more than seven million drivers. Of this number, it is anticipated that approximately 400,000 will choose to obtain a CDL.

Source: Driver Services Department Research

Sixty percent of all commercial motor vehicle operators licensed in Illinois are residents of the Chicago metropolitan area.

Source: Driver Services Department Research

Failure to fully implement the requirements of CMVSA could cost Illinois more than \$36 million annually in lost federal highway funds. Monetary sanctions will begin October 1, 1993, against those states that have not complied with the requirements of CMVSA.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Illinois chaired the 13-member Committee of States that coordinated development of new testing procedures that will be carried out at the national level. Input from the Secretary of State's Truck Safety Task Force was instrumental in this process. In addition, a total of four committees, comprised of more than 40 staff members, are working on the implementation of CDL legislation to ensure smooth and efficient implementation of the law and to minimize inconvenience for commercial motor vehicle operators.